

BASEBOARD ASSEMBLY AND TRIM

REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application claims priority from U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/422,078, filed October 29, 2002, the entire content of which is incorporated herein by reference.

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FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to decorative trim and, more specifically, to a two-piece baseboard assembly.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Trim is usually installed at a junction where the walls of a room meet the floor of
10 the room. Typically, the trim consists of multiple elongated pieces of material, such as
wood or plastic, which are installed with a backside against the wall and a lower edge
against the floor. The upper edge of the trim is typically immediately adjacent the wall
surface, such that independently painting or staining the wall or trim is difficult or
impossible. When a building is originally constructed, it is preferred that the trim be
15 installed after the wall is painted or wallpapered, and after the flooring material is
installed. The trim may be separately painted or stained prior to installation. However,
when an owner or occupant wishes to re-paint, re-stain, re-wallpaper, or re-floor the
room, the trim presents an obstacle. It must either be carefully worked around in order to
provide an aesthetically pleasing result, or alternatively, the trim may be removed, which
20 risks damaging the trim.

In light of the above, there is a need for improved trim designs which allow for an
easier installation and refinishing of the trim, or adjacent walls or floors.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides several improved trim designs that address many of the shortcomings of the prior art. According to one embodiment, a baseboard assembly is designed for installation at a junction region where a lower edge of a generally vertical wall meet the side edge of a generally horizontal floor. The assembly includes the base portion and a top portion. The base portion has a back surface and an opposed front surface. The base portion also has a lower edge and an upper edge. The base portion is configured to be positioned in the junction region with the back surface against the wall and the lower end adjacent the floor. The upper end of the base portion is sloped downwardly from the front surface to the back surface. The top portion has a back surface and an opposed front surface. The top portion also has a lower end and an upper end. The lower end of the top portion is sloped downwardly from the front surface to the back surface. The top portion has an installed position wherein the back surface is adjacent the wall and the sloped lower end is adjacent the sloped upper end of the base portion. The present invention also provides other trim designs, and methods for forming and/or providing trim.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIGURE 1 is a perspective view of a portion of the walls of a room, forming an outside corner, with a baseboard assembly according to one embodiment of the present invention installed thereon;

FIGURE 2 is a perspective view of a portion of an outside corner with a top portion of a baseboard assembly separated from a base portion of the baseboard assembly;

FIGURE 3 is an exploded perspective view of the assembly of FIGURE 1 with the top portions of the baseboard assembly separated from the base portions;

FIGURE 4 is a perspective view of a portion of an inside corner of a room showing a baseboard assembly according to the present invention installed therein;

FIGURE 5 is a cross-sectional view of one embodiment of a baseboard assembly according to the present invention;

FIGURE 6 is a cross-sectional view of another embodiment of a baseboard assembly according to the present invention;

5 FIGURE 7 is a cross-sectional view of yet another embodiment of a baseboard assembly according to the present invention;

FIGURE 8 is a cross-sectional view of a version of a baseboard assembly according to the present invention, including a wiring recess;

10 FIGURE 9 is a cross-sectional view of an alternative embodiment of a baseboard assembly according to the present invention with a wiring recess;

FIGURE 10 is a cross-sectional view of a ceiling trim assembly according to the present invention;

FIGURE 11 is a detailed view of a portion of a ceiling trim assembly according to the present invention;

15 FIGURE 12 is a view of an entry door with a trim piece according to a further embodiment of the present invention installed around the door opening;

FIGURE 13 is a cross-sectional view of the door and door jam of FIGURE 12, taken along lines 13 – 13; and

20 FIGURE 14 is a cross-sectional view of a trim piece according to yet a further embodiment of the present invention installed against a wall.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The present invention provides improved trim designs, which address several shortcomings of the prior art. According to a first embodiment of the present invention, a baseboard assembly includes separate base and top portions, such that the top portion
25 may be removed, so as to paint or refinish the adjoining wall without the need to carefully work around the upper edge of the trim.

The first embodiment of the present invention is illustrated in FIGURES 1 – 3. The baseboard assembly 10 is shown installed at an outside corner where a pair of walls,

12 and 14, meet at a generally perpendicular corner 16. The walls 12 and 14 meet the floor 18 in an area defined herein as a junction region. The baseboard assembly 10 includes a pair of base portions 20 and 22 which are preferably permanently affixed to the walls 12 and 14 adjacent the floor 18. A pair of top portions 24 and 26 are removably
5 disposed on top of the base portions 20 and 22. In this embodiment, the baseboard assembly 10 includes a corner assembly 28 having a base portion 30 that is preferably permanently affixed against the corner 16 adjacent the floor 18, and a top portion 32 that is removably disposed on top of the base portion 30.

Referring now to FIGURE 5, the cross-section of the base portion 20 and top
10 portion 24 is shown disposed at the junction region of the wall 12 and floor 18. The base portion 20 may be said to have a back surface 34 and an opposed front surface 36. The base portion also has a lower end 38 and an upper end 40. The base portion is shown in an installed position wherein the back surface 34 is adjacent the wall 12 and the lower end 38 is adjacent the floor 18. As shown, the upper end 40 of the base portion 20 is
15 sloped downwardly from the front surface 36 to the back surface 34. The upper and lower ends 40 and 38 may be alternatively referred to as surfaces. As shown, the upper end and/or surface 40 forms an acute inside angle 42 with the wall 12.

The top portion 24 may also be said to have a back surface 44 and an opposed front surface 46. The top portion also has a lower end or surface 48 and an upper end or
20 surface 50. As shown, the lower end 48 of the top portion 24 is sloped downwardly from the front surface 46 to the back surface 44. Preferably, the lower end of the top portion is sloped at the same angle as the upper end 40 of the base portion 20. This allows the lower end 48 to mate with the upper end 40. As mentioned previously, the base portion 20 is preferably permanently affixed to the wall 12, such as by using a nail 52. The top
25 portion 24 is removably disposed on top of the base portion 20 and held in position by the interaction of the sloped lower surface 48 with the sloped upper surface 40.

While the baseboard assembly of FIGURES 1-3 and 5 are shown with a very simple cross-sectional design, other configurations may also be used. For example, the upper end 50 of the top portion 24 may be radiused, fluted, or finished in other ways

similar to existing baseboard trim. The base portion 20 also may be shaped, other than shown, such as having character lines cut into the base portion 34, or having a lower edge that is shaped differently than shown. The same is true for the remaining embodiments of the present invention, discussed herein.

5 The illustrated embodiments of the present invention show the sloped upper and lower ends being angled at approximately 45 degrees. However, as will be clear to those of skill in the art, the sloped surfaces may be angled at angles other than shown. Also, the angles on the base portion and top portion are not necessarily required to be identical to one another. However, it is preferred that the angles match. While angles anywhere
10 between just less than 90 degrees and just more than zero degrees would be possible, it is preferred that the angles be in the range of 30 to 60 degrees. It is more preferred that the angles are in the range of 40 to 50 degrees and most preferred that they be approximately 45 degrees.

 Referring now to FIGURE 4, an inside corner is shown where a first wall 60
15 meets a second wall 62 at a corner 64. A baseboard assembly according to the present invention functions similarly with an inside corner as to the design shown on FIGURE 1, except that the corner assembly 66 is more securely entrapped by the adjoining wall sections. In both FIGURES 3 and FIGURE 4, the corner assemblies 28 and 66 are formed with base portions and top portions that have matching downward slopes. The
20 base and top portions may be more securely affixed to one another, in some embodiments, by providing a dowel extending from one of the pieces and a corresponding hole in the other piece. In embodiments including a dowel, the top and base portions do not necessarily need to be angled with respect to one another, but may instead have flat upper and lower surfaces.

25 Referring again to FIGURE 5, it may be seen that the base portion 20 and top portion 24 preferably have the same thickness, such that the front surfaces, 36 and 46 are generally coplanar when the top portion 24 is installed. Also, it is preferred that the base portion 20 and top portion 24 be formed from a single piece of material, such as wood, so that the grains and characteristics of the material match. This allows an aesthetically

pleasing appearance where the top portion 24 joins the base portion 20. As shown, the sloped cut between the top portion 32 and base portion 30 of the corner piece 28 is preferably positioned somewhat such that the character line lines up with the character line in the adjoining elongated pieces. In the preferred approach, a baseboard assembly is
5 formed by taking a single elongated piece of material and cutting it lengthwise into two pieces, with the cut being formed at a non-perpendicular angle to the front surface of the material. The elongated piece of material may have a generally rectangular cross-section as shown, or may be a more decorative piece of trim. As shown, the corner 70 between the front surface 36 and the upper end 40 of the base portion 20 may be radiused
10 somewhat, so as to provide a slight character line where the top portion 24 joins the bottom portion 20. Alternatively, the corners 70 may be unradius so as to reduce the character line.

FIGURES 6 and 7 show alternative embodiments of the present invention, wherein base portions 72 or 76 support top portions 74 or 78. In these embodiments, the
15 interface between the top portions 74 or 78 and the base portions 72 or 76 are not sloped, but are rather notched, as shown. These designs have the disadvantage that they cannot be easily formed by merely cutting a board at an angle, as with the version of FIGURE 5. Instead, additional cuts or machining is required, which reduces the ability for the grain to match between the top portions and base portions. With the embodiment of FIGURE
20 5, on the other hand, it is preferred that an elongated board be merely cut at a non-perpendicular angle to the front surface of the board, so as to form the base portion 20 and top portion 24. Material only corresponding to the thickness of the cutting blade is removed, thereby allowing a close match between the portions of the assembly.

FIGURE 8 illustrates a further embodiment of the present invention, wherein a
25 recess 80 is provided by the baseboard assembly 82. In this embodiment, the recess 80 is formed where the upper end 84 of the base portion 86 meets the back surface 88. The upper end 84 may still be considered to be sloped downwardly from the front surface to the back surface. Likewise, for purposes of the present invention, the upper and lower ends of the various portions of the trim assemblies may be considered to be sloped, even

if they are not sloped in their entirety. In the embodiment of FIGURE 8, the top portion 90 is formed the same as in the earlier discussed embodiments. FIGURE 9 has a base portion 92 that is formed the same as the embodiment of FIGURE 5, but the top portion 94 has a recess 96 formed where the lower end 98 of the top portion 94 meets the back surface 100. It should be noted that it is preferred that the sloped surfaces be left partially unfinished or less finished than the remainder of the trim, so as to provide a rough surface for engagement of the top portions with the base portions. Also, in some applications, it may be desirable to retain the top portion more securely with the base portion. For example, in older construction or on long pieces of trim, the base portion and top portion may have to conform to a wall that is not completely planer. In this case, it may be necessary to use a light adhesive to secure the top portion into the base portion. This does not defeat the purpose of the present invention, since the top portion may still be removed by separating the adhesive.

FIGURES 10 and 11 illustrate embodiments to the present invention designed for installation at a corner where two walls meet, or where a wall 102 meets a ceiling 104. This embodiment includes a central portion 108 that is permanently attached to the corner using fasteners such as 110 and a pair of edge pieces 112 and 114 that are detachably connected to the central portion 108. The central portion 108 may be solid, as shown, or hollow. The edge pieces 112 and 114 may be removed when the wall 102 and ceiling 104 are repainted. FIGURE 11 shows a detailed view of one approach interconnecting one of the side pieces 112 with the central portion 108. The side piece 112 has a tab 116 that engages a recess 118 in the central portion 108. The tab 116 may be slightly larger than the opening to the recess 118 so as to provide a secure attachment. Other approaches may also be used, such as dowels and holes, or the tab 116 may have a flexible end portion allowing it to pass into the recess 118 and grip the recess. In the embodiment illustrated in FIGURE 11, the back corner 120 of the side piece 112 is radiused, as with an additional embodiment of the present invention as discussed with respect to FIGURES 12 – 14. However, it may also be a generally right angle edge. The same is true for previous embodiments of the present invention.

Referring now to FIGURE 12, a door 130 is shown positioned in an opening in a wall 132, and surrounded by trim 134. FIGURE 13 shows a cross-section of the door 130, wall 132, and trim 134. FIGURE 14 shows a similar piece of trim 136 positioned against a wall 138. As best shown in FIGURE 14, the trim 136 has a back surface 140, an opposed front surface 142, and a pair of side edges 144 and 146. The edges 144 and 146 are radiused into the back surface 140, so as to provide radiused corners 148 and 150 respectively. The radiused curvature of these edges is preferably in the range of .125 to .75 inches, and more preferably in the range of .175 to .375 inches. By providing a radiused curvature on these curved edges 148 and 150, the wall 138 may be painted more easily, without removing the trim 136. That is, a painter may paint up close to the edge of the trim 136, without paint getting on the edges 144 and 146. Instead, the paint can extend slightly under the recess provided by the radiused edge without contacting the trim itself. The trim 134 in FIGURE 13 is formed in the same way, though shown in a smaller scale. If the adjoining surface is not to be separately painted or finished, the edge may be left as a right angle to avoid a gap or a shadow.

As will be clear to those of skill in the art, the illustrated embodiments of the present invention may be altered in various ways, without departing from the scope or teaching of the present invention. The following claims define the scope of the present invention.

We claim,